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Presidents Page

William J. Egan

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President's Page

In the November, 1950 issue of *The American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, Frederick C. Irving, M.D. published a monograph on tubal sterilization. Dr. Irving had been my professor of obstetrics at Harvard Medical School. He was a gentleman intolerant of the beliefs of others. Interestingly enough, he waited until his retirement as professor and chief of obstetrics at the Boston Lying-In Hospital before he published this monograph devoted to the mechanics of ligating tubes. He concluded his article with: "For those curious about such matters, it is significant to note that in the entire series of 1106 patients, 667 or 61.2% were of the Roman Catholic faith."

This article was brought to the attention of the Boston Guild of St. Luke. Through its chaplain, the article was passed to Chancery for a directive of action. A conference of clergy and doctors was called by the Chancellor. The conclusions reached were the following: 1) Contrary-wise, medical papers would be of little value where this paper dealt solely with the mechanical act of sterilization and not with indications. 2) Public discussions might inversely advertise the hospital and doctor. 3) The most effective measure would be to offer Catholic patients far better facilities under Catholic auspices and thereby attract the case-load away from institutions intolerant of Catholic beliefs.

Forthwith, Archbishop Richard J. Cushing announced the plan of converting one of the less adequate general hospitals of the archdiocese into a Maternity Center. Steps were taken also to improve St. Elizabeth Hospital's maternity wing. The staff conversion and hospital reconstruction were time consuming but effective. In 1957, St. Margaret's Hospital delivered 4,052 babies, in contrast to 2,098 in 1950. This, added to the increase in the other Catholic facility — St. Elizabeth's — 2,036 in 1950 to 3,616 in 1957, totals 7,668 deliveries under Catholic auspices.

This report is made to answer nationally the published allegation of November 1950 and to emphasize, again, that Catholic Action in medicine is most necessary and can be most fruitful.

WILLIAM J. EGAN, M.D.

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